

Section 1: Introduction

On October 26, 1986, Congress passed the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. This law requires each State to meet the same minimum standards for commercial driver licensing. The standards require commercial motor vehicle drivers to get a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). You must have a CDL to operate any of the following Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMV's):

- a) A single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 26,000 pounds.
- b) A trailer with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds if the gross combination weight rating is more than 26,000 pounds.
- c) A vehicle designed to transport more than 15 persons (including the driver).
- d) Any size vehicle which requires hazardous materials placards.

(Your state may have additional definitions of CMV's.)

To get a CDL, you must pass knowledge and skill tests. This manual will help you pass the tests. To find out which parts of this manual you should study, see Figure 1-1.

This Section Explains

- **Commercial Driver's Licence Tests**
- **Other Safety Act Rules**

You will have to take one or more knowledge tests, depending on what class of license and what endorsements you need. The CDL knowledge tests include:

- the General Knowledge Test, taken by all applicants.
- the Passenger Transport Test, taken by all bus driver applicants.
- the Air Brakes Test, which you must take if your vehicle has air brakes.
- the Combination Vehicles Test, which is required if you want to drive combination vehicles.
- the Hazardous Materials Test, required if you want to haul hazardous material or waste.
- the Tanker Test, required if you want to haul liquids in bulk.
- the Doubles/Triples Test, required if you want to pull double or triple trailers.

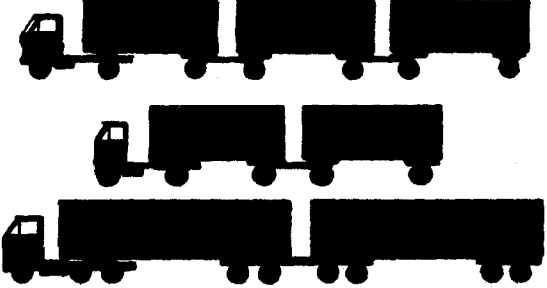
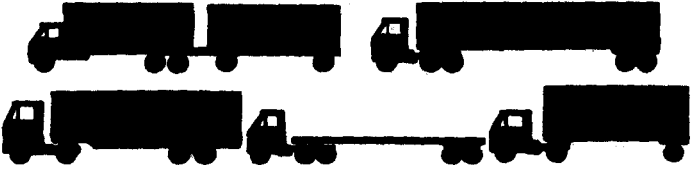
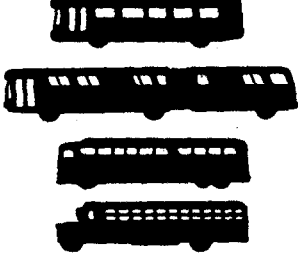
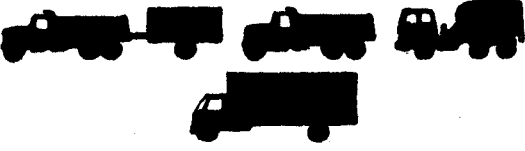

If you pass the required knowledge tests, you can take the CDL skills tests. There are three types of CDL skills tests: the pre-trip inspection test, the basic control skills test, and the road test. These are described below. You must take these tests in the type of vehicle you wish to be licensed for.

1.1 Commercial Driver's License Tests

- **Knowledge Tests**

- **Skills Tests**

How To Use This Manual

If you want to get a license to drive this type of vehicle or a similar tank vehicle*	Study these sections of the driver's manual
	<p>Section 1: Introduction</p> <p>Section 2: Driving Safely</p> <p>Section 3: Cargo*</p> <p>Section 5: Air Brakes</p> <p>Section 6: Combination Vehicles</p> <p>Section 7: Haz Mat (If needed)</p>
	<p>Section 1: Introduction</p> <p>Section 2: Driving Safely</p> <p>Section 3: Cargo*</p> <p>Section 5: Air Brakes</p> <p>Section 6: Combination Vehicles (except double / triple trailer info)</p> <p>Section 7: Haz Mat (If needed)</p>
	<p>Section 1: Introduction</p> <p>Section 2: Driving Safely</p> <p>Section 3: Cargo</p> <p>Section 4: Passengers</p> <p>Section 5: Air Brakes (if needed)</p>
	<p>Section 1: Introduction</p> <p>Section 2: Driving Safely</p> <p>Section 3: Cargo*</p> <p>Section 5: Air Brakes (if needed)</p> <p>Section 7: Haz Mat (If needed)</p>
<p>(CDL required only if these vehicles are used to haul hazardous materials)</p> 	<p>Section 1: Introduction</p> <p>Section 2: Driving Safely</p> <p>Section 3: Cargo*</p> <p>Section 7: Haz Mat</p>

* If you want a tank vehicle endorsement, study especially Section 3.4

Figure 1-1. How To Use This Manual

Pretrip Inspection

Purpose. To see if you know whether the vehicle is safe to drive.

Test Procedure. You may be asked to do a pretrip inspection of your vehicle or to explain to the examiner what you would inspect and why. The examiner will mark on a scoring form each item that you correctly inspect or explain. This manual tells you what you need to inspect.

Basic Control Skills Test

Purpose. To evaluate your basic skills in controlling the vehicle.

Set-up. The test set-up consists of various exercises marked out by lines, traffic cones, or something similar. The exercises may include moving the vehicle forward, backing, and turning maneuvers.

The examiner will explain to you how each exercise is to be done. You will be scored on how well you stay within the exercise boundaries and how many pullups you make.

Road Test

Purpose. To evaluate your ability to drive safely in a variety of on-the-road situations.

Test procedure. The test drive is taken over a route specified by the examiner. It may include left and right turns, intersections, railway crossings, curves, up and down grades, rural or semi-rural roads, city multi-lane streets, and expressway driving.

You will drive over the test route following instructions given by the examiner. The examiner will score specific tasks such as turns, merging into traffic, lane changes, and speed control, at specific places along the route. The examiner will also score whether you correctly do tasks such as signalling, searching for hazards, controlling speed, and lane positioning.

There are other new Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act rules which affect drivers.

1.2 Other Safety Act Rules

- You cannot have more than one license. If you break this rule, a court may fine you up to \$5000 or put you in jail. Keep your home state license and return any others.
- If you are an experienced commercial driver and have a safe driving record, you may not need to take the skills test to get your CDL. Check with your driver licensing authorities.
- You must notify your employer within 30 days of a conviction for any traffic violation (except parking). This is true no matter what type of vehicle you were driving.
- You must notify your motor vehicle licensing agency within 30 days if you are convicted in any other state of any traffic violation (except parking). This is true no matter what type of vehicle you were driving.

- You must notify your employer if your license is suspended, revoked, or cancelled, or if you are disqualified from driving.
- You must give your employer information on all driving jobs you have held for the past 10 years. You must do this when you apply for a commercial driving job.
- No one can drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle after April 1, 1992 without a CDL. (However, your State may require you to have a CDL before then.) A court may fine you up to \$5000 or put you in jail for breaking this rule.
- Your employer may not let you drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle if you have more than one license or if your CDL is suspended or revoked. A court may fine the employer up to \$5000 or put him/her in jail for breaking this rule.
- All states will be connected to one computerized system to share information about CDL drivers. The States will check on drivers' accident records and be sure that drivers don't get more than one CDL.
- You will lose your CDL for at least one year for a first offense:
 - if you drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance (for example, illegal drugs).
 - if you leave the scene of an accident involving a CMV you were driving.
 - if you used a CMV to commit a felony.

If the offense occurs while you are operating a CMV that is placarded for hazardous materials, you will lose your CDL for at least 3 years. You will lose your CDL for life for a second offense. You will also lose your CDL for life if you use a CMV to commit a felony involving controlled substances.

- You will lose your CDL:
 - for at least 60 days if you have committed 2 serious traffic violations within a 3-year period involving a CMV.
 - for at least 120 days for 3 serious traffic violations within a 3-year period.

"Serious traffic violations" are excessive speeding, reckless driving, and traffic offenses committed in a CMV in connection with fatal traffic accidents.

- If you drive when your blood alcohol concentration is .04 percent or more, you are driving under the influence of alcohol. You will lose your CDL for one year for your first offense. You will lose it for life for your second offense. If your blood alcohol concentration is less than 0.04 percent but you have any detectable amount, you will be put out-of-service for 24 hours.

These rules will improve highway safety for you and for all highway users.

Your State may have additional rules which you must also obey.